October 7, 2024

Honorable Judge Charlene D. Jackson
Maricopa County Superior Court - Southeast
222 East Javelina, 4th Floor, Courtroom 403
Mesa, Arizona 85210
DRJ24@jbazmc.maricopa.gov

Dear Judge Jackson,

I am writing to bring to your attention a significant number of constituent complaints I have received from mothers involved in high-conflict custody matters before your division. These cases typically involve allegations of parental alienation and the appointment of forensic providers, including but not limited to Dr. Raymond Branton, Dr. David Weinstock, Dr. Robert DiCarlo, and Dr. Celice Korsten. While complaints have arisen from across the Maricopa County Family Court, it is particularly concerning that a disproportionate number of grievances involve your division.

Of utmost concern is the recurring nature of these complaints, which suggest a troubling pattern. Specifically, all of the constituent complaints I have received involving cases before your division share one common and deeply concerning allegation: claims of unfair bias on your part, as well as allegations of bias and potential collusion with the court-appointed experts involved in these cases. The claimants consistently report that this perceived bias has resulted in adverse rulings that place their minor children at risk.

Additional Concerns Raised:

1. **Allegations of Judicial Bias**: Constituents have alleged a pattern of bias in your rulings, particularly in cases involving forensic providers whom you appoint. These complaints suggest that your rulings consistently favor one party—typically at the expense of the mother and children involved—despite the evidence presented. There are claims that these adverse rulings may be rooted in favoritism, which undermines trust in the impartiality of the court.

2. **Concerns of Collusion with Court-Appointed Experts**: A significant number of complaints have also alleged bias among the court-appointed experts, coupled with concerns of improper collusion between your court and these experts. These allegations

suggest that certain forensic providers may be improperly influencing decisions, potentially to the detriment of the children and families involved.

3. **Rulings Inconsistent with Arizona Law and Procedural Requirements**: Many constituents have expressed concern that rulings from your division appear to be inconsistent with Arizona's statutes and the Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure. In particular, I have been informed that significant rulings often lack little or no rationale, leaving the parties confused and frustrated, especially when facing critical issues related to custody or financial obligations.

4. **Appointment of Forensic Providers and Financial Hardship**: Several constituents have reported that you appoint court experts—over their objections—while requiring the objecting party to bear half or more of the associated costs, without the court making any specific findings regarding their ability to afford such services. These appointments reportedly result in costs often exceeding $15,000 to $25,000 or more. Multiple constituents report being forced to sell personal assets or incur substantial debt simply to comply with these court orders. There is also a growing concern that non-payment, even when due to legitimate financial hardship, results in the threat or imposition of sanctions, including, at times, the loss of custody.

5. **Adverse Custody Orders Placing Children at Risk**: Most concerning of all are reports that this perceived bias and potential collusion have resulted in custody orders that place children in harm's way. Specifically, I have received multiple reports from constituents who claim that custody has been awarded to a parent with a history of abusive behavior or neglect, despite strong objections from the other parent and, in some cases, the expressed wishes of the children themselves. The paramount obligation of the family court is to safeguard the well-being of the children, and these reports raise serious concerns about whether that obligation is being fulfilled.

Given the gravity of these allegations, and considering the fundamental responsibility of the family court to protect innocent children, the information I have learned has left me gravely concerned and warrants close review. It is with that sentiment that I also should inform you of my intention to file a formal request with the Arizona Judiciary Committees to formally review these claims and that a formal complaint is forthcoming.

I want to make clear that my intention is not to jump to conclusions but rather to understand these matters more thoroughly before any further action is taken. As such, I would like to invite you to meet with me to discuss these concerns in greater detail and to provide your perspective on the serious issues raised by these constituents.

It is my hope that we can address these concerns through dialogue without the necessity of formal legislative measures. However, if necessary, I am prepared to take further steps, including utilizing the full scope of legislative authority to investigate these matters. I trust that you will appreciate the seriousness of these complaints and recognize the need for transparency and resolution.

Please contact my office at your earliest convenience to arrange a meeting. I look forward to your response and hope that we can work together to ensure that the best interests of the families and children of Arizona are fully protected.

Sincerely,

Representative Rachel H. Jones
602-926-3558
Rachel.Jones@ azleg.gov

Arizona House of Representatives
1700 W. Washington Street, STE. H
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2844